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Soft Skills: Path Ways To Student Success

Dr. M. Manjula

Professor

H&S Dept

Malla Reddy College of Engineering

HYDERABAD

Abstract

Soft skills play an important role in a successful career as well as during social interactions in the society in every one's life. These skills are also highly sought after by not only to fresh graduates but also employers recruiting fresh graduates. The main purpose of this study was to investigate and discuss the importance of soft skills for their education and employment. Engineering departments widely recognise an increasing need to equip students with effective study skills early in their college education and basic professional skills prior to graduation. Soft skills are a combination of people skills, social skills, communication skills, character or personality traits, attitudes, career attributes, social intelligence and emotional intelligence quotients, among others, that enable people to navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve ... problem solving skill, team building as now a days most of the projects and works demand team work, creativity, positive attitude, self-discipline and confidence.

In the present working environment, employers seek candidates who can perform their jobs well but who can also fit into the company culture and interact with other employees. They should be able to analyse upcoming issues and develop creative solutions to overcome them. In order to do these things successfully, students need to develop soft skills. This can be learnt by attending workshops, practicing public speaking in front of mirror to forego fear and listening to motivational speeches. Some of the techniques are discussing a problem, keeping an open mind to evaluate tough situations, brainstorming ideas and solutions and keeping a positive attitude. Soft skills can also be learnt by doing some courses and degrees offered by few schools of Management.

Keywords: Social skills, communication skills, evaluate, personality traits, attitudes, career attributes.

Students of today are the future employers and employees of profitable global businesses. For students to stand out as promising assets to multinational organizations, they need to invest in the sharpening of what are labelled as soft skills. These abilities which are linked to personality traits are a host of interpersonal capabilities that will help the present day students to transform into outstanding corporate resources. Hard skills and technical skills are not sufficient to get employability. The other skills required are soft skills. A student's soft skills can be defined as his or her "abilities, skills, traits, attitudes, behaviour personality rather than a technical knowledge". Soft skills have been considered as one of the essential attribute among employability skills. This study aims to investigate the impacts of soft skills possessed by students on their employment opportunity. Soft Skills cover a wide area of skill sets. Soft Skills that students need to develop today are interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, time management adaptability etc. To stand out in this competitive world, a student is required to hone many skills and abilities which cannot be learnt in a day. A student needs to carve out these skills by practising every day and this takes a long time. These skills will be helpful not just in schools and colleges, but also in building a lucrative professional career. What are soft skills? These are skills that can be used to convey ideas and messages in an effective manner. These skills can also be used to handle serious situations while taking care of overall scenario. The soft skills are very important in today's world where management and human resources are given major focus.

Soft skills are attributes that enable you to connect in meaningful interactions with others. Since most jobs require teamwork, it's important to possess soft skills to enhance your employability. They will help you to increase productivity in career, build professional relationships and thrive at job. Preparing students for successful careers is a major part of every educator's job, but all professional development programmes may not cover the skills employers are currently seeking—things like "emergent" leadership, adaptability, humility, and ownership. In contrast, a lack of soft skills can limit your potential, or even be the downfall of your business. By developing strong leadership, teamwork, and communication abilities, you can run projects more smoothly, deliver results that please everyone, and even positively influence your personal life by improving how you interact with other and teamwork. Soft skills teach how to collaborate with team members. So, if students are looking to establish a successful professional career, here are the numerous ways in which soft skills are important for them to enjoy an edge over others who are not abreast with these life-changing "people skills".

The following are skills which enable students to nourish themselves and their careers.

1. Presentation skills: Presentations are part of student life. It happens as a learner, a student will be asked to address the class and share his or her opinions about a particular topic that is discussed in class. It allows students not only to form opinions about various subjects, but also encourages conveying their opinions boldly. It is this power of written and oratory expressions that is bestowed by incorporating soft skills into the daily routine of students. Steps to improve presentation skills:

- a) Command on the subject
- b) Enthusiasm
- c) Practice
- d) Attend and learn from other presentations
- e) Visualize surroundings
- f) Greetings

2. Productive skills: Speaking and writing are productive skills. These are also known as active skills. Organizing, planning and delivering speech are signs of productivity skills. These also help for better understanding of class room lectures. Students step into a class with the prime aim of learning new things and subjects that are of interest to them. In keeping with this primal need of students, soft skills come handy as instruments that will make learning interesting and fruitful. With soft skills, students will be able to adapt themselves to different teaching and learning patterns and will try to assimilate what all is taught in class. Students can solve problems employing the principles of soft skills while staying inquisitive about their surroundings and their subject matter. Allowing them to interpret and explain their inferences, students through soft skills will be able to uncover the steps they need to take to face challenges. The following are the steps taken to gain productivity. They are:

- a) Focus
- b) Set goals
- c) Working according to requirements and available resources
- d) Balancing multiple tasks
- e) Identifying factors causing delay and trying to solve them.
- f) Completing work before given time.
- g) Write clear and concise emails.

3. Goal setting and target achievements: Students need to learn the importance of setting both personal and academic goals for themselves along with the pride that they enjoy upon meeting their targets. They will learn how to make their scholastic goals. It is not only about having a goal. It is also about articulating your goal so that it comes as a reminder to you with every breath you take. Abdul Kalam said, "All of us do not have equal talent. But, all of us have an equal opportunity to develop our talents." Goals should be smart in achieving. To succeed, one needs to set goals. Without goals, focus and direction is lacked. Setting a goal is a process that starts with careful consideration of what you want to achieve and ends with a lot of hard work to do it. In between there are some very well defined steps which will allow to accomplish goals. They are

- a) Writing down the goal on paper: once your dream is committed to paper it becomes concrete.
- b) Dream the goal: Dream is given sense of reality.
- c) Thinking should become capital asset
- d) Burning desire
- e) Specific and well-defined goal
- f) Measurable
- g) Goals should be visualized
- h) Achievable
- i) Relevant
- j) Time bound
- k) Regular review process

4. Discipline: A day in the life of a student introduces him/her to myriad new things that cannot be learnt through printed text books. Once soft skills become a part of student life, they will help them to lead a self-disciplined life that revolves around the educational values that should be inculcated by them. Students will tread the path of education with a strong positive attitude coupled with an undeterred commitment towards their ultimate goal. Interest in educational curriculum will be evident when students maintain an eye-to-eye contact with the faculty. The ways to be followed to build discipline are :

- a) Paying attention
- b) Preventing from procrastination
- c) Telling consequences

5. Leadership quality: The qualities of a good leader are integrity, gratitude and empathy. Students will be able to motivate themselves to take on leadership roles so as to attract the attention of others. A sense of trustworthiness will also emerge when you begin to assess the leadership qualities in other students. Additionally, confidence is a soft skill that will help a leader about a particular issue. A leader should be dynamic and dedicated.

Here are few ways to be good leader. They are:

- a) Honesty
- b) Commitment
- c) Communication
- d) Creativity
- e) Confidence

6. Time management: It is important skill to be managed. Time management is to use one's own time effectively or fruitfully. It's about taking control of what time we have and optimizing it for productivity, focus, and above all, balance. Here are some tips to manage time effectively. They are:

- a) Set goals both short term and long term
- b) Create a Master Schedule like preparing to do list
- c) Start working on assignments early.
- d) Keep record all the things you need to accomplish then focus on completing one task at a time.
- e) Eliminate distractions
- f) Prioritize tasks
- g) Plan to complete sensitive ones first
- h) Cleaning off desktop
- i) Keeping phone on silent

7. Adaptability: Adaptability means being a perpetual optimist and exhibiting extraordinary buoyancy. Adaptability skills can be possessed both in attitude and action, and one can't exist without the other. Max McKeown says, "Adaptability is about the powerful difference between adapting to cope and adapting to win."

8. Confidence: Confidence is your belief in your ability to fulfil the goals assigned to you. It is one of the most critical skills to develop. Confidence helps to solve problems without giving up. Steps to improve confidence which also helps are:

- a) Maintaining positivity in difficult circumstances
- b) Being polite in a conversation
- c) Being a good leader

9. Self-awareness: Being self-aware is essential for the continuous development of your professional and personal skills. Strategies to build confidence are:

- a) Accept mistakes with grace
- b) Academic challenge
- c) Keeping check on one's activities
- d) Building strong and lasting relationships

10. Problem-solving: Problem solving enables to analyse upcoming issues and develop creative solutions to overcome them. One of the characteristics of problem solving is asking questions and exploring. These people are critical thinkers, decisive, and explorative. Few steps can be taken to solve problems. One way you can help learners develop problem-solving skills is to offer game-based learning. . It's difficult to become good at problem-solving if you're never faced with problems. Challenging games give students the opportunity to test their decision-making skills in a safe, risk-free environment. Problem solving skills coupled with your innate ability to express them better and do well in exams. They are

- b) Discuss a problem neutrally
- c) Examining how a problem affects the team and its productivity
- d) Coming up with possible solutions
- e) Making plans to implement the solutions.
- f) Teamwork
- g) Adaptability
- h) Game based learning

11. Creativity: Students with creativity will come up with innovative solutions for various problems. Thinking creatively allows learning continuously with no limits. Creativity helps in brainstorming ideas and solutions. Students are now in a spot to uncover their hidden potential that was lying dormant in them. Every student brings to the table a host of talents that amaze both the educators and their parents. Most of the times, the hidden talents of students are brought to light during some unexpected instances. While some students are blessed with a high degree of creativity, there are others who demonstrate excellent organizational skills. There are others who always sport the aura of positivity, wherever they go. All these are talents that will help students uncover their strongest abilities that haven't seen the light of the day.

12. Team building: Team building is a soft skill that should be inculcated by every student to become a team player, especially concerning the submission of group activities. Every student begins to work with the ultimate goal in mind and communicates in the right manner for the benefit of the entire class.

Conclusion: Soft skills are personal characteristics that enhance an individual's interactions, personality, personal habits, language, job performance and career prospects and optimism that characterize relationships with other people. Students will be able to better handle interpersonal relationships with a strong sense of empathy through soft skills training programs. They will also be in a favorable position to monitor the emotions of others so as to come up with well-informed perceptions about others. They will have to tread the path of sharpening interpersonal skills. Only then will you demonstrate the traits of commitment, goal-consciousness, enthusiasm and motivation. By keeping in practice and making habits one can enhance soft skills. A number of soft skill trainings help students to prepare for the questions that will appear in exams, bring in a host of thinking skills that can help to crack numeric and quantitative problems.

All these abilities will become the pillars of support to settle down in a respectful and highly satisfying employment that every student dreams of. A sense of self-confidence is evident with all such students who have absorbed soft skills. While such students not only demonstrate a high level of adaptability with changing situations and study groups, they will also be able to better express themselves in college forums and inter-collegiate debate and elocution competitions. Communication skills, tagged as one of the essential traits to succeed not only as a promising student but also as a potential employment resource are bestowed to students who sign up for soft skill training. Soft skills keep students motivated to perform better in their academics. This motivation manifests in the form of a positive body language. Once you have mastered these soft skills, you can go ahead and sport these on your resume so as to attract the attention of hiring managers scouting for skilled and confident resources. The curriculum of most of the courses need to be made as explicit as possible leading to clarity of experiences to be provided to students through appropriate methods, media and approaches for developing both discipline specific hard skills and appropriate soft skills. Even the evaluation and assessment mechanisms are to be made more detailed making expectations from teachers and students very clear without any ambiguity. Furthermore, the assessments must be valid, adequately reliable, cost effective and useful for job selection and career planning.

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